

STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS

Dr. Roy Vagelos
President
Merck Sharp & Dohme Research Labs
Westpoint, Pennsylvania 19486

Dear Roy:

This is in connection with the letter (enclosed) that I just received from Dr. Mahon about our request for contribution for research support from the Merck Institute. There are two complications that I hope warrant my taking this up with you again.

First of all, there was plainly a misunderstanding about the level of support that we were pursuing from private sources for the project "Environmental Health Aspects of Carbon." Yes, it is true that we were requesting a very large amount of money from NIEHS for the first year: namely about \$170,000 plus \$130,000 for equipment. But that is precisely why we felt it was imperative to seek some degree of matching contributions from other sources, as we really have very little hope of being able to recruit the entire sum from the NIEHS. In our conversation I had indicated my hope that an amount like \$25,000 towards the equipment might be a point of departure for further discussion. Let me assure you that \$15,000, if that is your limit, would be most welcome if the other elements of the proposal are consistent with the goals of the Merck Institute for extramural support.

The other factor that you will have anticipated, and which is the reason that I am addressing this personally to you, has of course to do with the matters we discussed during our meeting in New York. You can imagine that this is a very difficult time, trying to sustain my responsibilities for the continuity of long standing research programs here, in the face of the other contingencies.

What deserves to be stressed now is that Dr. Smith is a highly competent, ingenious and self-sufficient investigator. He missed, by a hair's breadth and solely for administrative reasons, getting an award of an RCDA that would have also earned him a faculty slot, and we have been caught in a vicious cycle between the funding and the academic opening, in trying to make decent arrangements for his future research. I won't pretend to have played only a nominal role in the development of this research grant, but I am quite confident about Dr. Smith's abilities to carry it through superbly once it is launched. Another point that deserves emphasis is that Carl Djerassi has been a very close associate with both of us in the development of this line of work -- as can be seen from the bibliographies -- and he would readily and competently take over my role as principal investigator on this proposal if it were indicated.

I hope this additional information suffices, at least, to impel you take another look at the possibility of some contributory funding, and to let me know if you have any further questions about it. I would leave entirely to your own discretion and information to decide how to deal with your colleagues at Merck about my own personal status. It would be unfair to Dr. Smith to have this issue prejudice the groundwork we are trying to lay for his own future; and I would not be troubling you if even a modest grant did not have very useful leverage.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

Enclosure

JL:ek-f